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DESPAIR

IN

L O V E;

AN

IMPRECATORY PRAYER,

Poetical:

AND AN

ODE TO VIRTUE.

BY JAMES DAVISON, NEWCASTLE.

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DESPAIR IN LOVE;

AN

IMPRECATORY PRAYER,

Poetical.

STULTUS ET IMPROBUS HIC *AMOR* EST.—

Horace.

CLARISSA, tell me, whence thoſe burſting ſighs:
Why thoſe ſalt floods of tears, that drown mine eyes?
Why all this tumult in my throbbing breaſt?
Why am I ſo unhappy, ſo diſtreſt?
Why do I mourn and weep the livelong day,
And ſadly ſigh my wretched life away?
Why do I ſeek the ſolitary grove;
And, ſhunning pleaſure, all-dejected rove
Where the rude rock preſents its naked head,
And make my tears my food, the earth my bed?

Why do I wiſh for death, that ſhuns my call;
And for true love, a wretched victim fall?
Why do not *perjur'd villians* undergo,
To them a due deſert, this load of woe?
Why ſhould they blaſt, ſecure, the virgin's charms,
Seduce, poſſeſs,—and then forſake her arms;
While I, thus faithful, drag my life in pain,
And for my conſtant love, meet baſe diſdain?—
Yet ſo it is:—Oh, WOMAN! made to damn
Mankind at laſt, and kindle here, hell-flame!
Oh, execrable race! Oh ſex accurſt!
Of ev'ry evil, miſchief, plague, the worſt!
Nor have who feel time's woes, or pains of hell,
(Whatever fabling prieſts and poets tell)
Ever a miſery ſo bitter prov'd.
As one perfidious woman is, belov'd.

Where the ſad ſullen wave the gloomy ſhore
Rolls reſtleſs o'er, and winds inceſſant roar;
Where tempeſts ſweep the ſeas, and laſh the ſkies,
And only ſcenes of deſolation riſe;
There will I, with the ſhipwreck'd ſeaman, mourn
My frail bark loſt;—now never to return!
To *peace* and *joy*, forever *loſt* to *me*,
And loſt forever, Clara, too, to *thee*,
No reſtleſs billow is a thouſandth part
So reſtleſs as the workings of my heart;

No bellowing winds that o'er the ocean ſweep,
And toſs with fury all the raging deep,
May be compar'd with that impetuous ſtorm,
That ſhakes my ſoul in ev'ry various form :
Love, *fear*, *deſire*, *hope*, *doubt*, my boſom rend,
And *jealouſy*, the moſt accurſed fiend !
Oh, though as pangs of hell, ſevere the pain
Of CLARA's hate,—yet, welcome her diſdain,
Rather than parted love !—Oh ! never give
Me half her heart, and ſuffer me to live !

And now, indulgent heaven, (for my deſpair
Thou know'ſt) give gracious ear, and grant my pray'r.
But thou, falſe-hearted maid belov'd, no boon
Of thee I aſk, but thy eternal frown ;
Thy charms can now no ſoft deſires create ;—
Let thy diſdain be ſtedfaſt as my hate !—
Oh, thou art chang'd ! *Meduſa's* horrid ſnake*
Hangs from thy head, and writhes around thy neck ;
Gorgonian looks, and wild diſtorted eyes,
Shed terrors round :—aghaſt, the lover flies !

But as all *monſters* in their various kind,
Monſters ſtill ſuited to their natures find ;
As the fierce Lioneſs the Lion takes,
And Serpents meet with Serpents in the brakes ;

* One of the *Furies*, having *ſnakes* inſtead of *hair*.

As Tygers, Panthers, Dragons, Wolves, and Bears,
Know their own mates, and each to each repairs;
So may ſome *ſcoundrel*, falſe, like you, and baſe,
Mark *you* for guilt, for ruin, and diſgrace.

Oh, while cloſe folded in his faithleſs arms,
Some wretch forſworn ſhall hang upon your charms;
Shall preſs your panting breaſt, your lips ſhall kiſs,
And your loſt ſoul ſhall falſely dream of bliſs:
When in his eyes the foul and murky fire
Shall vilely kindle looſe, debas'd deſire;
When ſudden, burſting into eager flame,
Your glowing wiſhes, mingling, are the ſame;
When you ſhall, liſt'ning, hear his plighted vow,
And madly think the perjur'd villain true;
May you his well-diſſembled tale believe,
And find, too late, he flatter'd to deceive:
May it forever be your wretched fate,
To curſe the man you truſted, and to hate.

So the deceitful monſter of the *Nile*,
Th' abominable, hideous *Crocodile*,
Sheds pitying tears, diſſembling to betray,
And rends, Oh horrid! the aſtoniſh'd prey!
So the *Cameleon* varies ſtill his ſkin,
And all is chang'd, but the ſame heart within.
Thus may it fare with you: And may you know
Nought elſe on earth but perfidy and woe;

Feign'd love, a faithleſs heart, vows inſincere,
And hear none elſe but villains falſely ſwear;
May oaths be taken only to deceive,
And they ſtill *ruin*, while you ſtill *believe*.

And when in ſorrow you at length ſhall caſt
A retroſpective view o'er all that's paſt,
May the remorſeleſs winds refuſe to hear
Your ſighs, th' indignant earth to take one tear;
Lock'd in that moſt inexorable breaſt,
May no groan 'ſcape, to give a moment's reſt;
Your tears froze in their fountains ever be,
And their dry'd ſources ſeal'd eternally:
Still may you wiſh to weep and ſigh, in vain;
And may your wiſh, deny'd, increaſe your pain:
Chas'd from your aching eyes be ſoothing reſt,
And eaſe be baniſh'd from your panting breaſt.
And when, conſum'd with wretchedneſs and grief,
Plung'd in the wave, you beg a ſad relief,
Or graſp the poignard, or embrace the cord;—
May that ſtill break, and pointleſs be the ſword.
May furious ſurges caſt you back to ſhore,
And death, in ev'ry ſhape, may you in vain implore:
Outcaſt, abandon'd, wretched, and undone,
Through a wild deſert world, rove frantic on;
Loaden with terror, miſery, and care,
Wring your writh'd hands, and tear your flowing hair:

Still may my form in ev'ry place ariſe,
Still may you ſee my tears, and hear my ſighs;
Still may my eyes their fires indignant dart,
And horrors upon horrors rend your heart.

When hoary years (for I would wiſh you old)
Chill all your beauty's bloom, and your baſe blood grows cold,
Still may you burn, a prodigy! in fires,
That freezing blaze;—and rack'd with fierce deſires,
In all you wiſh to make you happy, croſt,
May you ſtill mourn and rage for comforts loſt:
See your once blooming youth in age decay,
And, unregretted, ſwept your charms away;
Repining, ſtung with bittereſt remorſe,
Your youth, your age, your life, your being curſe;
In pangs unutt'rable give up your breath,
And ſcream diſtracted in the arms of death.

But if 'tis fate's unalt'rable decree,
That you but few revolving ſuns ſhall ſee,
Then may your little time on earth be ſpent,
In horror, frenzy, madneſs, diſcontent:
Still may your *friends* (but ſure they cannot claim,
Deteſted wretches! ſuch a ſacred name)
As *Argos*, with an hundred ſquinting eyes,
Blaſt all your preſent hopes and future joys.
And anxious to ſecure your youthful charms,
(Oh, friends indeed!) from a ſeducer's arms,

And baneful ſnares, though wiſely they contrive,
His hopes and you at once away to drive;
Though from fair *Anglia's* ſhore (with arms and arts,
And captivating charms, and honeſt hearts,
Enrich'd—where o'er the happy cultur'd plain,
Luxuriantly waves the golden grain,—
Where the tall foreſt clothes the nodding hills,
And on the margin of her thouſand rills,
Verdure, delighted, blooms—and ſharp and ſhy,
Skim in the azure ſtream the ſinny fry—
Where mercy tempers juſtice,—and where love
With cherub-ſmile deſcending from above
And joyous eye, (Oh cruel deſtiny!)
Diffuſes bliſs to all around—but me!)
The ſtately bark its proud departure ſteers
For fam'd *Hibernia*,—(far begone, ye fears,
Ye hopes, ye wiſhes!—all that rends the heart,
And fills the ſoul with woe when lovers part!)
And though, like them, you court the ſwelling gale
To fill, propitious, the luxuriant ſail;
Though on the lofty deck your feet aſcend,
And many pray'rs your ſafe return attend;—
Though tempting airs, and gentleſt zephyrs riſe,
The ſeas all ſmooth, all azure blue the ſkies—
Shine forth the ſun, the moon in lovelieſt light,
Gild with her mildeſt beams the ſhades of night;

Yet ſoon far other pray'rs ſhall rend the ſkies,
And *Æolus* from his dark cave ariſe,
Sent forth by angry *Jove* to laſh the deep,
O'er which the furious winds ſhall raging ſweep.
O Jove, O Æolus, ſupport my cauſe,
And overthrow, at once, all nature's laws;
Return, ſtorm, tempeſt, chaos, ancient night,
And drive or hide this monſter from my ſight.
All dæmons, all avenging gods attend
A lover's prayer, bid wrathful ſtorms deſcend.
Howl, ye tempeſtuous winds, with awful roar,
And bear this ſavage to ſome ſavage ſhore.
Nor can I reck, whate'er your fate may be;
For, as you're ſunk in guilt,—in infamy
And woe, may you a ſad example prove
To future ages of a faithleſs love.
Preſs'd in ſome *Cannibal's* deteſted arms,
May he ſeize, raviſh, and *devour* your charms;
Unlov'd and hated may you live; and die
Abhorr'd, and on the ground neglected lie;
Expos'd, the bones the glutted ſavage ſpar'd;—
Nor may a tear drop, nor a groan be heard!
May ravens, vultures, and all birds of prey,
Clang their black wings, and ſhriek for joy that day;
The carneous fragments into atoms tear;
And may no ſhrub or flow'r bloom ever there;

But pois'nous ſteams and ſulph'rous blaſts ariſe,
Infect the air, and gleam along the ſkies;
And may ſome ever-overſhad'wing cloud,
That dreary place with conſtant horrors ſhroud;
May nought but birds obſcene, and monſters foul,
There with terrific ſcreams and yellings howl:
And may all *faithleſs lovers* there be driv'n,
On earth deteſted, and caſt off by heaven.

All this I wiſh, this is my ardent pray'r,
This, only this, *can ſolace my deſpair.*

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

AN

ODE *to* VIRTUE.

ALAS! how the once glowing landſcape fades,
Whoſe blooming beauties vivify'd the mind;
How its bright luſtre darkens in the ſhades
Of ſable grief, nor leaves a trace behind!

No more its genial, animating beams
Shall raiſe the thought, or chear with proſpects bright;
For even its laſt, languid, dying gleams
Has baleful mis'ry blotted from the ſight.

Yet had my ſoul with joy the ſcene ſurvey'd
Of rip'ning comfort to the mind expand,
When happier days, in brighter beams array'd,
Roſe all ſerene, and ſhone unclouded grand.

Then, when the tow'ring muſe, on gladſome wing,
Sublime to ſoar with fancy's flights aſſay'd;
With rapt'rous joy ſhe ſwept the lyric ſtring,
And boundleſs ſcenes of rich delight ſurvey'd.

Vain, ſhort-liv'd joy!—like beams which meteors raiſe,
A flatt'ring luſtre kindled to the ſight;
But ſoon extinct, the momentary blaze
Appears no more,—ſuffus'd in endleſs night.

For *indolence*, perverting wiſdom's choice,
With love of eaſe my ſlothful mind ſubdu'd;
" Some little reſt," ſhe ſaid, with guileful voice,
" To ever-during toil may be allow'd."

" Go, *learned fool*! and rove through mazes dark;
" Be rack'd with keen deſire, and deep deſpair:
" Conſume whole years in ſtriking out a ſpark;—
" Sure ſuch attainments well repay thy care!"

Doubt after doubt perplex'd my wav'ring mind:—
Fatigue, and diſappointment, and diſmay,
Sad painful ſearch of what I ne'er might find,
Stood fierce confeſs'd in terrible array.

Then *ſcience* droop'd, the *muſe* her aid withdrew,
And wiſdom ſpread no more her mental ray;
Dark, and more dark, the threat'ning tempeſt grew,
And on youth's flatt'ring morn encroach'd life's ſtormy day.

In that diſtreſsful hour my griefs to ſooth,
With falſeſt blandiſhments ſoft *pleaſure* came:
"The rugged path of life 'tis mine to ſmooth:
"Give o'er thy toils," ſhe ſaid, "why drudge for fame?

"What is that knowledge, which thy cheated mind,
"With reſtleſs anguiſh ſtill," ſhe cry'd, "purſues!
"A phantom, that thou ſeek'ſt in vain to find;
"Direct, dear youth, thy thoughts to happier views.

"*Caſt off thy gloom.* I come to chaſe diſtreſs:
"Luxurious feaſts, mirth, muſic, beauty, wine;
"All that thy heart can wiſh, or wiſh'd, can bleſs;
"Theſe will I give, for all theſe joys are mine."

Confus'd I ſaw, with inexperienc'd eye,
The different proſpects on each hand appear:
There virtue's path, all ſtrew'd with thorns, did lie,
And pleaſure's flow'ry paſſage open'd here.

Of glorious hardſhips cowardly afraid,
With ghaſtly dread the thorny way I view'd;
And, by a ſhew of happineſs betray'd,
A far more dang'rous tract, though ſeeming fair, purſu'd.

Thus tempts the Syren, with enchanting ſound,
The gazing mariner, and ſpreads her charms:
Ah! whither would he?—lo! the gulf profound
Receives him, lock'd within a monſter's arms!

Oh, had the Syren, *pleaſure*, dropp'd her lyre
In that tremendous gulph o'er which ſhe ſings;
And ceas'd, for once, to kindle ſoft deſire,
And lure my mind with ſweet, but fatal things:

Then had I paſs'd the precipice ſecure,
Nor fall'n;—but, ah! not wholly *paſſive* thou;—
To all whom harm, *diſguis'd*, awaits, a pow'r
Attends the dark aſſailant to ſubdue.

But I, nor fearing harm, nor wanting aid,
Approach'd, preſumptuous, to the horrid brink;
Nor wot the danger, till I was betray'd,
Nor crav'd aſſiſtance, till I half did ſink!

Thus, the unwary traveller, miſled
By wand'ring vapours kindled in the night,
Makes in ſome pit, or bog, or brook, his bed:
And proves, too late, how falſe the fatal light.

Suffice it then, ſince I, with pleaſure's ſweets,
Have drank the ſev'nfold portion of her gall;
And found in ev'ry vary'd cup ſhe greets,
A pois'nous acraſy diffus'd through all:

Diffus'd through all; yet artfully conceal'd,—
The deadly dregs ſhe mingles with a dew
More luſcious than Arabian gums can yield,
And while ſhe ſpreads deſtruction, pampers too!

Suffice it then, that, reſcu'd from her hand,
I err no more, though each allective lure;
Nor madly tempt again the dang'rous ſtrand,
The dreadful *Syrtes*, yawning to devour:

But bravely trample on her ſordid joys,
Which blot the ſoul, and damp her purer fires;
And virtuous bliſs purſue, which never cloys,
But *peace*, perennial, balmy peace, inſpires.

When *pleaſure*, ſmiling, ſpreads her painted charms,
And all her raptures kindle to the view;
When with illuſive hopes the boſom warms,
And we would rove in her elyſium too;

When, ſporting in the ſunſhine of her beams,
We eye, with fond delight, her cloudleſs ſkies;
Or, ſtretch'd ſupinely, rich in golden dreams,
And tranſports in the mind, deluſive, riſe;

Beware! the crafty ſorcereſs beguiles
The blinded *paſſions* with a gaudy ſhew
Of treach'rous ſplendor; and her blazon'd ſmiles
Are only feints, diſguiſing real woe.

The ſoul is ſcorch'd, that feels her torrid fires;
Who baſks, is poiſon'd, in her putrid rays;
Who on her moſſy couch reclines, expires
Convuls'd, for there the baneful adder plays.

Who plucks her flow'rs, or in her valleys roves,
Shall find her *roſes* gather'd with a *thorn*;
Shall prove that all the fragrance of her groves
Breathes plagues contagious, though on *zephyrs* borne.

Shall prove, alas! that ev'ry joy ſhe gives,
Is mix'd with pain, or miſery alone;
And that her vot'ry only truly lives
To death, and melts but in a pungent groan.

How *ſtrong* the *ſpell*, which thus the ſoul confounds!
How *thick* the *ſhades*, which thus the judgment blind!
Where certain danger, death, deſpair, ſurrounds,
For pleaſures ſeeking, and repoſe of mind!

Then let us of the tempting bait beware
The fatal rocks of Syren pleaſure ſhun;
And henceforth be it our peculiar care,
In virtue's ſafe, though rugged path, to run.

Thus when, with careleſs ſtep, and ſhameleſs mein,
And looſely flowing robe, and wanton eyes,
The goddeſs of delight, fair *pleaſure's queen*,
The great *Alcides* did of old ſurprize;

And promis'd ev'ry pleaſure that his thought
Could frame, or wiſh require, or ſenſes taſte;
And all unearn'd with toil, with care unbought,
Unmix'd with woe, with full delight embrac'd:

With half reſolve th' enchanting voice he heard,
Liſten'd, and gaz'd, and gaz'd and liſten'd ſtill;
When lo! a more *majeſtic maid* appear'd,
His noble ſoul with nobler fires to fill.

Modeſt her looks, yet dignify'd her air;
Piercing her eye; and onward as ſhe mov'd,
Auguſt, yet graceful, ſtill ſhe ſeem'd more fair,
More nobly ſweet,—more fit to be belov'd.

Him ſhe addreſs'd with firm, intrepid voice;
" Wouldſt thou *true joy* derive from juſt renown?
" *Take virtue's path.* Know, Hercules, thy choice,
" Or makes thee baſe, or for thee wins a crown!

" But I nor ſumptuous feaſts, nor myrtle bow'rs,
" Nor eaſe, nor what the ſenſes crave, beſtow;
" The prize I hold, toil, danger, care, ſecures;
" *True bliſs*, and *real good*, from *virtue* flow.

" Up, then, *Alcides*, combat toil and pain,
" And, combating, o'ercome; be bold; deſpiſe
" Hardſhip, and ſlothful fear; and dare to gain
" A place, by glorious action, in the ſkies."

While thus the mighty work the goddeſs preſs'd,
And urg'd him virtuous glory to purſue;
With gen'rous purpoſe glow'd his manly breaſt;
And pleaſure, ſick'ning, pall'd upon his view.

" Oh grant me ſtill, propitious pow'r!" he cry'd,
" Thy precepts to attend; and warm my heart;
" Inſtruct my mind; be thou my conſtant guide:
" And from thee never let me more depart."

Well pleas'd the heav'nly maid the hero view'd,
And heard his pure deſire; and, chaſtely kind,
With wiſdom, courage, patience, fortitude,
And conſtancy, and truth, ſhe arm'd his mind.

By theſe through her in ev'ry conflict ſav'd,
Firm he aſſay'd, unſhaken overcame;
Danger and toil, and ev'ry terror brav'd,
And gain'd the ſkies, and everlaſting fame.

Come then, thou ſacred gueſt, fair VIRTUE! come,
And take poſſeſſion of my throbbing breaſt;
That troubled manſion make thy tranquil home,
And bid the raging ſtorms of paſſion reſt.

Knowledge ſhall pour her intellectual ray,
Beaming with mild effulgence o'er the mind;
The clouds of paſſion ſhall be purg'd away,
And all the ſoul, throughout her pow'rs, refin'd.

Oh then, celeſtial pow'r, ſweet PEACE divine!
Thy ſatisfactions on my heart beſtow;
Through my calm'd ſpirit ſhed thy beams benign,
And let thy placid rays diſpel the gloom of woe!

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA